

# For Your Health and Benefits

From the Arizona Department of Administration  
Human Resources/Benefits Office



February 2005



## Expert Advice on Combating Heart Disease

By Jeri Penrose, Wellness Program Communications

For the first time, heart disease is no longer the #1 killer of Americans under 85. Cancer has surpassed it, but that doesn't mean Americans should ease up on strengthening and protecting their hearts.

According to the American Cancer Society's annual statistical report released in January, the single biggest reason that heart disease is no longer number one has to do with fewer smokers. That means kudos to those of you who've kicked the habit. Still need help in the fight against heart disease?



In honor of Heart Health Month, your Employee Wellness team decided to talk with local experts in their fields to learn about the best ways to fight heart disease with good nutrition and moderate exercise.

Marie Tymrak is a public health nutritionist and registered dietician and Emily Augustine is a physical activity coordinator. Both work for the Arizona Department of Health Services.

### **Q: What part do diet and nutrition play in the area of heart health?**

**Tymrak:** "A big part! A study was conducted in the 1960s that found lower rates of heart disease in all Mediterranean countries, and no incidence of deaths from heart disease in Greece. That's our key evidence that it's not just *how much* people eat, but also *what* people eat that affects heart health."

### **Q: Why is exercise so vital when it comes to strengthening the heart?**

**Augustine:** "The heart is like any other muscle in the body; if you don't keep it active, it will be less efficient. Less active, less fit people have a 30 to 50 percent greater risk of developing high blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease."

### **Q: What are some small, simple changes that a person could start with when wanting to make his or her diet more heart healthy?**

**Tymrak:** "First of all, a major thing that milk drinkers can do is

to begin drinking milk that is lower in fat. For example, if you drink whole milk, go down to 2 percent; if you drink 2 percent, go down to 1 percent, and so on. This would be a very significant change that could save you a good deal of saturated fat. Two percent milk actually has half the fat of whole milk, without changing the amount of protein and carbs. Other small changes could include eating a piece of whole fruit over a glass of juice and adding more beans to the diet (avoid beans with added lard)."

### **Q: Name a few specific benefits for the heart when it comes to regular physical activity.**

**Augustine:** "Regular physical activity means a lower risk of hypertension, high cholesterol, and heart disease in general. It's been shown that increased activity is the number one lifestyle change in reducing cholesterol levels and keeping them down. Also, people who exercise tend to feel better, eat better, and take better care of themselves in general. I've found that the more you move, the more you want to."

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## Weight Watchers®

Arizona Benefit Options offers the Weight Watchers At Work program to State employees at State worksites.



The "At Work" program is presented as a 10-week series.

From July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2005, all State employees are eligible to join Weight Watchers for \$59.00 for each 10-week series. The fee includes materials.

Spouses and dependents are welcome to attend Weight Watchers classes at a copay of \$90 per 10-week session plus a \$10 charge for materials due at the first session they attend.

**Interested in attending a class or having Weight Watchers at your office?**

If you are interested in attending a class, please call Weight Watchers to check for available worksite classes. Weight Watchers will conduct a free introductory meeting at your worksite. Weight Watchers may be reached at 602.248.0303. Ask to speak to someone in the "At Work" Department. Please identify yourself as a State of Arizona employee.

## What's Feldenkrais?

People take **Feldenkrais Awareness through Movement® (ATM)** classes for a variety of reasons. Some want to relieve pain or tension. Some want to improve their flexibility or balance. Some simply enjoy feeling energized and refreshed by the slow meditative movements. Feldenkrais is helpful

for people who experience pain from stress or injury. It can help people regain mobility and agility.

ATM classes are done lying on the floor and consist of gentle meditative movements. Each ATM class is different, focusing on a different aspect of functioning, from freeing the spine to expanding breathing. Through "guided attention" each person finds the movement or position that works best for him/her.



For more information, visit [www.feldenkrais.com](http://www.feldenkrais.com) or email [Kathryn.underwood@att.net](mailto:Kathryn.underwood@att.net).

## Try a class!

Phoenix- 4 Tuesdays, February 1-22, 2005 11:30am-12:30pm  
Arizona Supreme Court 1501 W. Washington, Exercise Room

There is a \$20 copay for this class. Call 602.771.WELL to register.

## Get a Massage!

This program is open to State employees and their dependents. The cost is \$10 for a 15-minute massage or \$20 for a 30-minute massage.



The best part is that we come to you! Licensed massage therapists from National Stress Station will travel to worksites with at least 15 interested employees (and/or family members). Call National Stress Station at 480.990.1701 to discuss options for having this program at your worksite.

## Mammography Screening

Mobile On-Site Mammography (MOM) is an accredited mobile facility that offers mammograms at the worksite.

Call MOM at 480.967.3767 or toll free at 1.800.285.0272 to make an appointment or if your office is interested in having the mammography van at your worksite.

Phoenix- Wednesday, February 9, 2005 9:00am-4:00pm  
Arizona State Capitol  
1700 W. Washington

Mesa- Thursday, February 17, 2005 2:30pm-5:00pm  
Dept. of Motor Vehicles  
4123 E. Valley Auto Drive

Phoenix- Friday, February 25, 2005 8:00am-5:00pm  
Public Safety Retirement System  
3010 E. Camelback Rd.

## Free Blood Pressure, Diabetes, or Body Composition Checks

The Wellness Program can do them for you - call 602.771.WELL to make an appointment at our office located in Phoenix.

If you have 15 or more people interested at a worksite, we can come to you! Please call for more information!

Outside the Phoenix area? We would love to visit your office, too. You can call us toll free at 1.800.304.3687.

-Heart Disease,  
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that alcohol has calories and can inhibit judgment."

**Q: Why do you think it's so hard for Americans in general to adopt heart-healthy eating habits?**

**Tymrak:** "I think we're bombarded with convenient, tasty products and we are separated from food as a nurturing and nutritious part of community. So often, it's all about convenience! But we are what we eat, and we can't fight disease with sugar and fat. It takes more time and energy to nurture ourselves with whole foods, but it's well worth it."

**Q: What are the risks to your heart when exercising?**

**Augustine:** "If you already have heart disease, there are definitely some risks involved, but for the average individual, the risks are minimal. The key is to not do too much too soon and to make sure you warm up first. If you are over 40, have a serious medical condition, or are inactive, always check with a doctor first. But what people don't realize is that you don't have to break a sweat right away! Even beginning with 10 minutes of walking a day and building up from there would be a good start."

**Q: Can you give some heart healthy tips for eating out?**

**Tymrak:** "Ask for the take-home container at the beginning of the meal. It's not necessary to eat all those big portions. Instead, save a portion for a later meal at home. Also, watch those appetizers! What you eat before the meal comes also counts for total calories. And last, keep in mind

**Q: What are some of the keys to success when it comes to exercise?**

**Augustine:** "For busy people, schedule it into your day for up to a week in advance. If you're having a hard time scheduling it, think of ways to get it in. What will you need to give up? And remember that an easy or short workout is better than no workout. Most of all, make exercise a habit before you start worrying about your intensity level."

Want to learn more about this topic? Check out these FREE American Heart Association brochures available in our Wellness Resource Center: Walking for a Healthy Heart, Easy Food Tips for Heart-Healthy Eating, and Just Move! With a simple email to [wellness@azdoa.gov](mailto:wellness@azdoa.gov), you can request one, two or all three brochures. Be sure to specify the brochure you want and a worksite mailing address.

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Published by

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[wellness@azdoa.gov](mailto:wellness@azdoa.gov)

Phone: 602.542.5008 FAX: 602.542.4744  
Persons with a disability may request reasonable accommodation by contacting the Benefits Office. If you need this issue in an alternative format, please call 602.542.5008.

## Free Mini-Health Screening at work!

Screening takes as little as 15 minutes and no appointment is necessary.

- ☐ Checks of blood pressure and percent of body fat
- ☐ Height/weight/frame size assessment
- ☐ Cholesterol and blood sugar check by blood draw.
- ☐ Personal and confidential report mailed to your home.
- ☐ Women age 40 and over are eligible for a free osteoporosis screening.

Women **under** 40 can also have an osteoporosis screening for a copay of \$30.00.

Men 40 and over can get a prostate cancer (PSA) screening exam by blood draw for a copay of \$5.00.



An eight-hour fasting period before this screening is required (for the cholesterol and blood sugar screening).

We can schedule this at worksites throughout the state.

Call us at 602.771.WELL if you would like to have this screening at your office!

## Wellness Shorts

February 2005

### Americans' Weight Gain Costs Airlines

Americans gained an average of ten pounds per person in the 1990s. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that the extra weight cost U.S. carriers an additional 350 million gallons of fuel in 2000. That amounts to an additional \$275 million annually in fuel bills for the financially strapped American airline industry.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### California National Leader in Reducing Smoking

The rate of California adults who smoke has fallen from 23% in 1988 to currently 16%—one of the lowest rates in the nation. About 24% of American adults nationwide smoke. The rate of California high school students who smoke has dropped from 22% in 2000 to 13% in 2004. The reason for this dramatic drop in smokers? For the past fifteen years, California has pursued an aggressive tobacco control program, and 10 years ago, California passed an unprecedented statewide, smoke-free workplace law. As a result, lung and bronchus cancer rates have fallen three times faster in California than in the rest of the U.S. The California Tobacco Control Program is the longest running anti-tobacco program in the U.S. and a model for the nation.

Source: *California Tobacco Control Update 2004*

### Lack of Sleep Risks Weight Gain

When you don't get enough sleep your blood level of leptin—a hormone that suppresses your appetite—drops. When the level drops, your appetite will increase for high-calorie, high-carbohydrate foods. To help keep your leptin level up and reduce your urge to overeat, get six to eight hours of sleep a night.

Source: *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, November 2004

### Drinking Alcohol Affects Blood Pressure

Drinking too much alcohol can raise your blood pressure. It also can harm the liver, brain, and heart. If you drink alcoholic beverages, drink only a moderate amount—one drink a day for women and two drinks a day for men.

Source: "Your Guide to Lowering Blood Pressure," National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

### Leading Weight-Loss Strategies: Eating More Fruits and Vegetables and Less Fat

According to a new survey of eating habits commissioned by the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR), 4 in 5 weight-conscious Americans are taking an old-fashioned, "common-sense" approach to managing

their weight. They're turning to salads, fruits and vegetables, and decreasing the amount of fat in their diets to shed a few pounds. The fact that a clear majority of Americans are adopting this approach amid the low-carb marketing craze is encouraging news to health experts concerned about the state of nutrition in the U.S.

Source: American Institute for Cancer Research, [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)

### U.S. Spending on Health Care

The U.S. spent nearly \$1.7 trillion on health care in 2003. For the first time, health care spending exceeded 15% of the gross national product.

Source: *Health Affairs*, January/February 2005

### Skin Cancer Screening at Work

Your employee wellness program offers skin cancer screening at worksites from April through September.



We contract with Banner Occupational Health to travel to worksites throughout Arizona. This screening is free to state employees.

If you would like to schedule a screening at your worksite, call 602.771.WELL for more information.